

# Re: defining success

A team approach to  
supporting students with FASD



we engage

A strategy guide for mentors and coaches  
working in schools

**Alberta**  
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## Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Actions	
1 Help school staff build an understanding of FASD	7
2 Identify student strengths and interests	12
3 Align strategies with student needs	14
4 Build rapport with school staff	17
5 Keep informed about current research and best educational practices	19
6 Support positive behaviour	21
7 Work with staff to make school a safe place	27
8 Help build a circle of peer support	30
9 Help build a circle of adult support	32
10 Plan for transitions	33
11 Support learning at home	35
12 Advocate for increased understanding and support for students with FASD	38
Tools	
A Answering Basic Questions about FASD	40
B Chronological-age versus Developmental-age Expectations	44
C Making Mental Shifts about Students with FASD	45
D Interest Inventory	46
E Parent Survey	47
F My Child Through My Eyes	48
G Top Three for My Child	49
H My Strengths Inventory	50
I Individual Student Support Plan	51
J Parents' Tips for Helping Their Child Feel Better	53

## Table of Contents

<b>K</b>	Feeling Better	54
<b>L</b>	How I Learn Inventory	55
<b>M</b>	Solution-focused Meetings Tip Sheet	57
<b>N</b>	Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting	58
<b>O</b>	Resources for Teaching and Supporting Students with FASD	59
<b>P</b>	Individual Behaviour Support Plan	61
<b>Q</b>	Tips for Parents: Participating in Behaviour Support Planning	63
<b>R</b>	Circle of Friends	66
<b>S</b>	Circle of Support	67
<b>T</b>	All About Me	68
<b>U</b>	Three Wishes for My Child	69
<b>V</b>	Let's Stay in Touch	70
<b>W</b>	Daily Report	71
<b>X</b>	My School Day Report	72
<hr/>		
	Endnotes	73
<hr/>		
	References	74
<hr/>		
	Index	76
<hr/>		
	Acknowledgements	82

# Re: defining success

A team approach to supporting  
students with FASD

This strategy guide is for mentors, support workers and coaches who are working with school-aged children and youth who are affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In addition to supporting these children and youth at home and in the community, you may be involved in advocating for and supporting them at school. This guide describes twelve types of actions you can take not only to support students in their school environment, but also to support the school staff who work with these students.

Many of the students you work with may experience difficulty at school, particularly at the junior and senior high levels. For other students with FASD, school may be a positive place for them, a safe place where they feel truly cared for. In order for school communities to be welcoming and successful places for these students, caring adults must work collaboratively as a team to support not only the students with FASD, but also each other. This team includes all those adults in the student's immediate circle: parents/caregivers, teachers, administrators, other school staff and mentors, community support workers and coaches. No one single person, no matter how determined, should have to act alone in his or her efforts to advocate for and support these students.

Your most important role as an advocate for students with FASD is to help create an understanding of the unique characteristics and needs of these students. Consider the experience of Myles Himmelreich, a young man impacted by FASD, who is now a successful mentor to youth with FASD:

*“For me, I felt I was being misunderstood when I was acting out and it was taken as misbehaving ... I wish they had asked—Was that misbehaviour or was it misunderstanding? Does that individual know what he should be doing? Does he truly understand? ... Individuals with FASD need guidance. Teach them what they can do instead of what they can’t do.”*

## Introduction

FASD is an invisible disability and the strengths and needs of students affected by FASD vary widely and may fluctuate from day to day and from situation to situation. All students with FASD need support and this support needs to be ongoing—needs will change over time and from context to context. Supports need to be responsive, respectful, flexible and creative. It is not as simple as assigning an individual school staff member to act as an “aide”—it’s all about finding out what kind of natural structures, strategies and relationships will create opportunities for an individual student to be successful in his or her learning, relationships and self-management.

Helping these children and youth truly be successful in school communities may mean redefining what success looks, sounds and feels like. For some students with FASD, rather than top marks on a test, success might be coming to school every day, being willing to try difficult tasks and having good relationships with their peers.

This strategy guide, *Re: defining Success*, offers ideas, actions and strategies that mentors, community support workers and coaches can use to support students with FASD in their school environment.

This guide complements the Alberta Education resource for teachers, *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope* (2004). This teaching resource is available online at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/fasd.aspx>.



Your experience working with families and children affected by FASD means that you will have valuable information about FASD that you can share with school staff to help them better understand the characteristics of FASD, and how the impact of this disability is varied and lifelong. Share ideas about developmental levels and encourage school staff to use positive reframing to see typical behaviours of students with FASD from a more positive perspective.

Here is the key knowledge to communicate about FASD:

- The challenges to learning and functioning that the student is experiencing are caused by brain damage. Although individuals may learn many coping strategies, the brain damage is permanent.
- The prenatal effects of alcohol are varied, and no two individuals affected will have identical characteristics or needs.
- Needs will be different at different stages and in different situations throughout individuals' lifetimes, depending on the level of support and structure available, the demands of the environment, and the physical and emotional health of the individual.
- A medical diagnosis of FASD can be a protective factor for individuals and their families; the diagnosis can increase understanding of the individual's needs and strengths, and be a catalyst for the individual receiving the supports he or she needs.
- All individuals have strengths that need to be recognized, identified and nurtured.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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- Offer fact sheets or other reference materials about FASD for school staff to read.

Make sure any material you share is easy-to-understand, reliable and written in a positive and hopeful tone.

See **Tool A** for a reproducible copy of a four-page fact sheet:

### Answering Basic Questions about FASD.

- Help create an understanding of the developmental level of the student.

FASD has a neurological basis that results in students with FASD being developmentally at a lower age than their actual physical age (some researchers say at almost half their physical age, so a 14-year-old student would be at an 8- or 9-year-old level emotionally and socially). However, a 14-year-old student with FASD would most likely share many characteristics with other 14-year-olds, such as likes and dislikes about music and clothing.

Examine the chart on the next page. Consider how you might help school staff think about the developmental level of the student and how staff expectations might have implications for the behaviour and needs of these students! <sup>1</sup>



Tool A Page 40

Chronological age-appropriate expectations	Developmental age-appropriate expectations
<b>Age 5</b> Be in school all day Follow three instructions Sit still for 20 minutes Participate in interactive and cooperative play Take turns and share	<b>Age 5 going on 2 developmentally</b> Take naps during day Follow one instruction Active, sit still for 5–10 minutes Parallel play “My way or no way” attitude
<b>Age 6</b> Listen, pay attention for 30–60 minutes Read and write Line up on their own Wait their turn Remember events and requests	<b>Age 6 going on 3 developmentally</b> Pay attention for about 10 minutes Scribble Need to be shown and reminded Don’t wait gracefully, act impulsively Require reminders about tasks
<b>Age 10</b> Read books without pictures Learn from worksheets Answer abstract questions Structure their own play at recess Get along and solve problems Learn inferentially Know right from wrong Have physical stamina	<b>Age 10 going on 6 developmentally</b> Beginning to read, with pictures Learn experientially Mirror and echo words, behaviours Require supervised play, structured play Learn from modelled problem solving Learn by doing, experiential Developing sense of fairness Easily fatigued by mental work
<b>Age 13</b> Act responsibly Organize themselves, plan ahead, follow through Meet deadlines after being told once Initiate, follow through Have appropriate social boundaries Understand body space Establish and maintain friendships	<b>Age 13 going on 8 developmentally</b> Need reminding Need visual cues, modelling Comply with simple expectations Need prompting Kinesthetic, tactile, lots of touching In your space Forming early friendships
<b>Age 18</b> On the verge of independence Maintain a job and graduate from school Have a plan for their lives Form relationships, safe sexual behaviour Budget their money Organize, accomplish tasks at home, school, job	<b>Age 18 going on 10 developmentally</b> Need structure and guidance Limited choices of activities Live in the “now,” little projection into the future Easily led, impulsive and sometimes inappropriate sexual behaviour Need an allowance Need to be organized by adults, limited self-management

See **Tool B** for a reproducible copy of this chart:  
**Chronological-age versus Developmental-age Expectations.**

One broad understanding for supporting students with FASD is to recognize that the students are actually behaving within their developmentally appropriate age range.

Parents and professionals report a significant shift in their perceptions once they understand that individuals with FASD have a neurologically-based disability. This, in turn, leads to more positive programming and supports.

- *Encourage school staff to look beyond appearances.*

Students with FASD who “look like they get it” when they don’t really, may mask their actual needs.

- *Talk with school staff about the types of mental shifts about FASD that can reframe student behaviour.*

As school staff and support workers, our own perspectives on FASD can make a big difference in how we interact with students and how they feel about themselves.

By reframing judgements of the behaviour of students with FASD into more compassionate terms, teachers can build more positive relationships and make better instructional choices.



Tool B Page 44



Making mental shifts about students with FASD<sup>1</sup>

<b>From seeing the student as ...</b>	<b>To understanding the student as ...</b>
Won't	Can't
Bad, annoying	Frustrated, challenged
Lazy, unmotivated	Trying hard, tired of failing
Lying	Story telling to compensate for memory
Fussy	Hypersensitive
Acting young	Developmentally younger
Trying to get attention	Needing contact, support
Inappropriate	Displaying behaviours of young child
Not trying	Exhausted or can't get started
Mean	Defensive, hurt
Not caring	Unable to show feeling
Refusing to sit still	Overstimulated, overwhelmed
Resisting	Doesn't "get it," lacks understanding
Trying to annoy me	Can't remember
Showing off	Needing contact, acceptance
<b>From personal feelings of ...</b>	<b>To feelings of ...</b>
Hopelessness	Hope
Fear	Understanding
Chaos, confusion	Organization, comprehension
Power struggles	Working with
Isolation	Networking, collaboration
<i>Rethinking FASD can shift how school staff see their roles and relationships with students. It could result in professional shifts such as the examples below.</i>	
<b>Professional shifts from ...</b>	<b>To ...</b>
Stopping behaviours	Preventing problems by identifying what student needs
Behaviour modification	Modelling, using visual cues
Changing people	Changing environments
Teaching one way	Teaching many ways many times



Tool C Page 45

See Tool C for a reproducible copy of the chart:  
**Making Mental Shifts about Students with FASD.**

■ *Model positive and hopeful language around FASD.*

Words are powerful and important tools in shaping ideas, perceptions and attitudes. In your interactions with school staff, be mindful of the words you use to talk about FASD and students with FASD. Positive and helpful language will demonstrate a commitment to these values:

- *Shaping positive attitudes:* One of the barriers for individuals with FASD is negative public attitudes. Thoughtful choice of words when sharing information about FASD can be instrumental in overcoming negative attitudes and in shaping positive ones.

- **Being sensitive to individuals with FASD (and their families):** Hopeful and respectful language around FASD also demonstrates a sensitivity and awareness of the feelings and comfort level of individuals with FASD and/or their families who may be part of the listening audience.
- **Using respectful language:** The words “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder” and “disability” are adjectives, not nouns. Use terms such as “a child with FASD” rather than “a FASD child.” Remember: it is people first, then the disability.
- **Acknowledging the diversity of individuals with FASD:** It is important to acknowledge that there is a wide range of variance in the characteristics, strengths, needs, and life circumstances of individuals with FASD. Avoid language that encourages stereotypes such as “All children with FASD ...” or “FASD children are ....” Avoid labels that put people into categories such as “the disabled” or “the handicapped.”
- **Being nonjudgemental:** When talking about life with FASD, choose words that are nonjudgemental, nonemotional and that provide accurate descriptions. Avoid words and images designed to evoke pity or guilt such as “afflicted with,” “stricken with,” “suffers from,” “handicapped,” “damaged,” “burden,” “victim” or “tragedy of ....”
- **Using everyday language:** As much as possible, use everyday terms rather than medical terminology. For example, rather than “patient,” use words like “individual,” “child,” “adult” or “student.” Rather than “disease” or “impairment,” use words like “condition,” “traits” or “difficulties with ....”

■ **Respect student and family privacy concerning a diagnosis of FASD.**

Families will have differing wishes for how much and who they share information with about their child’s FASD diagnosis. Always defer to their wishes and be sensitive to their need for privacy.

■ **Model positively phrased programming goals.**

Encourage school staff to focus on what the student will do or what supports will be put in place. For example, negatively phrased terms such as “decrease,” “will not” or “refrain from” can be replaced with more positive terms such as “increase,” “demonstrate” or “respond with.”

Collaborate with students, their families and school staff to identify individual student strengths and interests. Working together can help teachers plan programming and choose materials and tasks that will be more motivating, engaging and meaningful to students.

Having knowledge of an individual student's interests can help school staff connect learning activities to student interests. For example, a math teacher, knowing that a student has a strong interest in a specific hockey team, might decide to create number problems using that team's statistics. This appeal to personal interests could be quite motivating for that student (and other students interested in hockey) and could increase participation and learning in math class.

A strength-seeking approach will also help school staff reframe typical student behaviour (and misbehaviour) into more positive terms. Students themselves can be a great resource for identifying their own strengths and interests. They can often point out things that adults have not thought of.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- *Encourage school staff to find out about students' personal interests early in the school year.*

Share ideas for creating interest inventories. Some students will be able to complete these types of inventories independently. Others will need adult support with the reading and writing. For still others, the survey could be used as questions a caring adult uses in a one-to-one interview situation.

See **Tool D** for the **Interest Inventory** template.

- *Encourage school staff to ask parents and caregivers about their children's interests.*

Offer tools to gather and share this information, such as a parent survey.

See **Tool E** for the **Parent Survey** template.

- *Work with the family on ways to communicate information to school staff about their child's strengths.*

Consider the following list of strengths that many individuals with FASD might demonstrate:

- affectionate
- artistic
- athletic
- caring
- concrete thinker
- creative
- curious
- enthusiastic
- friendly
- high energy
- kind
- learn by doing
- musical
- outgoing
- sense of humour
- sense of wonder
- spontaneous
- trusting.



Tool D Page 46



Tool E Page 47

Offer tools parents and caregivers can use to record and communicate information about their child's strengths and needs, such as *My Child Through My Eyes* and *Top Three for My Child*.

See **Tools F and G** for *My Child Through My Eyes* and *Top Three for My Child* templates.

- Encourage school staff and families to help students identify their own strengths.

Offer tools adults can use with students to discuss and record personal strengths, such as *My Strengths Inventory*.

See **Tool H** for *My Strengths Inventory* template.



Tool F/G Page 48/49



Tool H Page 50



There are many strategies that can be helpful for supporting students with FASD. To be most effective, strategies must be aligned with individual student needs and must be respectful, manageable and compatible with the student's learning preferences, strengths and developmental level.

Many teachers are skilled at adapting their classroom routines and instruction for students with disabilities, such as learning disabilities and AD/HD. A number of the strategies will be helpful for students with FASD. Many of the strategies will benefit all students in the classroom, not only the student with FASD. See pages 15 and 16 for an example of what one school staff developed for their students with special education needs. In that school, each student had a customized version of this support plan.

See **Tool I** for an **Individual Student Support Plan** template.



Tool I Page 51

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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■ *Encourage the selection of strategies that are the least intrusive for students.*

If possible, avoid strategies that isolate students from peers or draw unnecessary attention to lack of abilities. Consider support strategies that benefit all the students in the classroom. For example, concrete representations of time such as visual timers may be essential supports for individual students with FASD, but they can also be used with the whole class. There will be other students who increase their understanding of the concept of time with this kind of visual support.

If students do need to be temporarily removed from the classroom, ensure it is to a safe space with adult support available. Also ensure a structured and supportive process is in place for helping returning students reintegrate into the classroom and participate in activities with peers.

■ *Encourage school staff to ask families to share strategies that are successful at home.*

If given the opportunity, parents and caregivers can often share strategies that work at home and can be successfully adapted for use in the classroom and throughout different school environments. Share tools for gathering this kind of information such as *Parents' Tips for Helping Their Child Feel Better*.

See **Tool J** for the **Parents' Tips for Helping Their Child Feel Better** template.



Tool J Page 53

■ *Encourage school staff to ask students what works for them.*

If given an opportunity, some students can identify strategies that work best for them. Share tools that school staff can use to identify strategies with students such as the *Feeling Better* or *How I Learn Inventory* graphic organizers. Some students may need assistance to begin defining their own needs. These tools can also be used individually as conversation starters or as interview tools. It may be helpful to offer suggestions in the form of questions; e.g., "When you're sad, do you like to be alone or be with another person?"

See **Tools K and L** for the **Feeling Better** and **How I Learn Inventory** templates.



Tool K/L Page 54/55

## Individual Student Support Plan

Student Name: David StudentTeacher-Advisor: Ms. MappHomeroom: 10CGrade: 10Current Reading Level: 7Current Math Level: 10Subject Teachers: J. Earth (science) J.H. Word (language arts)  
P. Numeral (mathematics) W. Mapp (social studies)

The following is a list of strategies and supports that may assist in student learning. Only those checked pertain to this student. Please feel free to add any strategies that you have found to be helpful and to contact the teacher-advisor if you have questions or suggestions.

**A. Seating**

- seat at front of class
- seat at back of class
- locate near teacher
- seat away from distractions
- allow student to stand or kneel rather than sit
- provide alternate workspace

**B. Instructional Presentation**

- adapt pace of lesson
- highlight key points of information
- provide examples completed by other students
- colour code print material
- break information into smaller steps
- photocopy notes
- provide regular review time in class

**C. Assignment Completion**

- allow extra time (if the student is able to complete the task)
- cover parts of worksheet
- increase white space for answers
- reduce amount of information/questions on the page
- ensure student records information in homework agenda
- provide weekly list of homework/reading assignments
- allow use of calculator
- provide checklist of steps to complete activity
- use computer to complete assignments

**D. Attention Support**

- reduce materials on desk
- provide buddy to clarify missed information
- provide checklist for organizational tasks
- use nonverbal or verbal sign to cue student

**E. Behaviour Support**

- provide buddy to model appropriate behaviour
- use agenda to communicate with other teachers
- create opportunities for breaks (e.g., for water, to the library)
- provide positive reinforcement such as low-key verbal praise



cont'd

**F. Reading Support**

- allow extra time
- buddy reading
- shared reading with trained peers or volunteers
- use of text-to-speech software

**G. Writing Support**

Reduce writing demands through:

- use of word processor (including spellcheck)
- allowing point form to replace paragraphs
- providing copies of notes and teaching students to identify and highlight main ideas
- providing graphic organizers for planning

**H. Assessment and Evaluation Procedures**

- smaller chunks of information or simpler concepts
- use individual criteria to evaluate tasks
- use notes or textbook during tests
- allow extra time on tests
- use word processor
- clarify directions

**Medical Issues**

Long acting medication (taken at home)

Asthma (currently under control but does have inhaler in backpack for exercise-induced incidents)

- There are no current medical issues relevant to this student's learning.

**Individual Information**

- Encourage David to send e-mail questions from home re: assignments. W. Mapp  
- He's also using e-mail to send himself reminders of assignments/tests (with a cc to dad).  
- Is using his personal music player for listening to novels. J.H. Word

**Teacher Assistant**

Does this student receive the support of a Teacher Assistant?  Yes  No

Name of Teacher Assistant \_\_\_\_\_

Check the types of tasks required:

- record class notes
- monitor student understanding of content
- reteach concepts
- monitor progress on assignments
- read and explain text and handouts with student
- report to teacher any important information on student's progress/understanding
- support small group work
- scribe for student

- troubleshoot assistive technology
- monitor student's on-task behaviour
- track assignment (know what is due, when it is due, that student is handing work in)
- monitor and organize binders/materials
- deal with minor discipline issues/report larger issues to teacher

Teacher assistant availability \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

An important part of building a rapport with school staff is acknowledging that classroom teachers face many daily challenges as they strive to meet the diverse learning needs of the students in their classrooms. When working collaboratively to support students with FASD, look for win-win solutions. Focus on the needs of the students and use a solution-focused approach.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- *Set a positive tone when meeting with school staff.*
  - Ensure the meeting has a clear purpose or goal.
  - Schedule meetings at a time and place that is convenient for everyone.
  - If it is a formal meeting, provide or post a written agenda.
  - Give each person an opportunity to introduce themselves to one another and explain their role as members of the student's support team.
  - Meeting time is often limited at school, so keep meeting brief (generally less than an hour) and make sure you finish on time.
  - Keep a written record of questions and issues to be addressed at a later date.
  - Share personal information about the student and his or her family thoughtfully and respectfully, and within the bounds of confidentiality.
  - Listen to understand.
  - Work to find common threads and common solutions.
  - Focus on solid information rather than emotions.
  - Ensure meetings end on a positive note; thank everyone for their time and contributions.

- *If there is a particular issue that needs to be resolved, suggest using a solution-focused approach.<sup>4</sup>*

If you are confident you have the skills, offer to facilitate a solution-focused meeting, using the following steps.

1. One member of the learning team agrees to act as the facilitator for the meeting. This individual needs to be positive, attentive, task-oriented, and be able to clarify issues and summarize. It is also important that the facilitator help each team member stay on topic and work toward appropriate, practical solutions.

2. The facilitator begins the meeting by inviting the learning team member who initiated the meeting to state clearly and concisely what the concern is. It is important to find out specifically what the team member wants to happen as a result of this meeting.
3. The team members ask questions to clear up any uncertainties they may have as to exactly what the issue is or what the related circumstances are. The facilitator may need to encourage team members to look for factors that appear to trigger or contribute to the problem, and to identify and analyze conditions that seem to alleviate the problem. As part of this analysis, team members may also identify available resources and the strengths of the student.
4. The team then discusses “What would the situation look like if this problem were solved?” This focuses the discussion on positive outcomes such as “John would come to school every day,” or “Mary would have friends.”
5. Once the problem or issue is clearly defined and positive outcomes identified, the team brainstorms ideas for how the problem may be solved. All ideas are recorded on chart paper. It is important at this stage of the process to let ideas flow freely and not to comment directly on any one idea.
6. The facilitator and the referring teacher review the strategies together and then rate each suggestion by assigning a number value to it.

For example:

1 = an idea or strategy that the teacher and/or parent wants to try

2 = an idea or strategy that has merit, but is not a priority

3 = an idea or strategy that has already been tried and didn't seem to resolve the issue

4 = an idea or strategy not immediately practical at this time.

7. The learning team develops an action plan for each strategy selected, including materials and resources required, persons responsible, and dates for follow-up and review.
8. The facilitator closes the meeting by thanking everyone and asking for feedback on the process. The team generally agrees to meet for a progress review in four to six weeks.



See **Tool M** for a reproducible one-page tip sheet:

**Solution-focused Meetings Tip Sheet**

and **Tool N** for a Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting template.

Tool M/N Page 57/58

What we know about FASD and educational interventions is constantly changing. Research publications, educational journals, popular press and websites present new information and ideas almost every day.

Educational research has some distinct challenges that other fields of research may not have. The school learning environment is complex, learning itself is a complex process and each group of students has diverse needs and strengths. When educational practices are successful for individual students or group of students, it is often difficult to identify exactly which factor has made the positive difference.

Many educational practices, such as the use of one-to-one teacher assistants and segregated special education classes, are being questioned. It is important to thoughtfully consider the potential effectiveness of any particular strategy or programming option before advocating for it. Students with FASD have such wide ranging learning needs that no one solution will meet every student's needs.

The more information you can share with school staff about FASD and best teaching practices, the more able they will be to reach and to teach these students.

In order to get the most out of the available information, you need to know:

- what kind of questions to ask
- where to look for information
- who to contact
- how to assess the reliability and validity of information sources.

The more information you have on a topic, the better your understanding of the issue will be. As a general guideline, try to gather information from at least three sources. Some of the information may be contradictory or may not provide much support. When dealing with issues where people have taken sides, it is up to you to ask good questions to help you determine if the research is reliable and to decide how the research can be used to make informed decisions.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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### *■ Share sources of reliable information with school staff.*

Several provincial ministries of education have free teacher resources available on their websites. School staff may not be aware of all resources available and may appreciate your drawing their attention to the resources. Be selective and limit your recommendations to two or three resources. The following resources for teachers contain clear descriptions of FASD and offer practical and effective strategies for supporting students:

- *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope* (2004) by Alberta Learning (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning). PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/fasd.aspx>

## Action 5

- *Towards Inclusion: Tapping Hidden Strengths: Planning for Students Who Are Alcohol-affected* (2001) by Manitoba Education, Training and Youth (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth). PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/fas/index.html>
- *Reach to Teach: Educating Elementary and Middle School Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* (2007) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration). PDF copies are available for downloading at [http://www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/Reach\\_To\\_Teach\\_Final\\_011107.pdf](http://www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/Reach_To_Teach_Final_011107.pdf).
- *Making a Difference: Working with Students Who Have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders* (2006) by Yukon Education (Whitehorse, YT: Yukon Education). PDF copies are available for downloading at [http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/fasd\\_manual\\_2007.pdf](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/fasd_manual_2007.pdf).



Tool O Page 59

See Tool O for reproducible list:  
Resources for Teaching and Supporting Students with FASD.



Help school staff identify specific behaviours that interfere with the individual student's success. Use this information to develop individual behaviour support plans that outline supports, intervention strategies and plans for teaching new skills.

Common behaviour problems students with FASD may demonstrate in school settings include:

- frustration because of difficulty with learning, attention, memory or language
- overreactions to light, sound or touch when their hypersensitive senses are flooded with information they cannot process. Overreacting can include anger, aggression and tantrums
- problems with transitions through the day especially when the usual routines change
- impulsivity, coupled with confusion about consequences of their actions. Sometimes this confusion is described as a lack of judgement or a failure to learn from mistakes and experiences.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

### ■ Share the three quick tricks of managing behaviour:

Be clear—Be direct—Redirect.

- Make directions concrete and literal.  
For example, use concrete language such as “Please walk on the right side of the hallways and leave room between you and other people” rather than vague directions such as, “Watch how you move in the hallways.”
- Be direct with students about what to do, rather than telling them what not to do.  
For example, phrase directions in the positive such as “Walk slowly in the hall.” If you say “Don’t run in the hallway,” the student with FASD may pay more attention to the word “run” than the word “don’t.”
- Redirect students who are misbehaving.  
For example, if a student is starting to roughhouse with another student in line, simply ask one student to move; e.g., “Please come here and carry this book for me.”

### ■ Help school staff reframe typical misbehaviours by identifying what these behaviours might communicate about the student's needs.

When a misbehaviour occurs, the focus should be on identifying what the student needs in order to be successful in this situation. Consider the examples on the next page.

## Action 6

Observable behaviour	Example of what this behaviour might mean	Sample strategies for redirecting or replacing this behaviour
Fidgets during an assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unsure what to do</li> <li>• distracted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate directions</li> <li>• Check for understanding by asking the student to demonstrate what you asked</li> <li>• Provide written directions</li> </ul>
Hits another child while standing in line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• another student bumped him/her</li> <li>• overstimulated by noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pair with a walking buddy</li> <li>• Place student at front or back of line to create more space</li> </ul>
Can repeat instructions but still not able to do what is asked	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knows what was said, but doesn't know how to put that into action</li> <li>• distracted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make instructions concrete and literal</li> <li>• Break instructions into small steps</li> <li>• Discuss how to approach each step</li> <li>• Demonstrate what each step would look like</li> <li>• Use sequential picture cards to prompt day-to-day routines</li> </ul>
Takes turns with difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lost track of the order and doesn't know where to start</li> <li>• overstimulated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a sequenced list of players and use a sticky note to move down the list as players take their turns</li> <li>• Use a visual schedule and change the icons with the student prior to schedule changes</li> </ul>
Becomes upset when a schedule change occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• usual understanding of how and when things are going to happen has changed</li> <li>• upset by change</li> <li>• needs time to get used to new idea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preview the change with a brief, concrete description</li> <li>• Have a plan in place for when changes do occur—10 minutes in a calm corner and/or with a buddy to review the change</li> </ul>

■ *Encourage school staff to focus on changing the environment rather than changing the student.*

Many students with FASD don't always have logical reasons for why they behave the way they do. Because they often have difficulty connecting cause to effect, many conventional behaviour management strategies based on consequences (e.g., punishments, rewards or a combination of both) have limited effectiveness with these students.

■ *Collaborate in the development of an Individual Behaviour Support Plan.*

Some students with intensive behaviour needs will require a formal individual behaviour support plan that documents and communicates their social-behavioural needs and the plans for addressing these needs over the school year. The plan should include:

- key understandings about this student's behaviour
- conditions or antecedent events that are most likely to trigger problem behaviour
- warning signs that the student is experiencing difficulty
- plans for diffusing the situation
- positive supports to help the student increase his or her abilities including directly teaching self-management skills
- what peers need to learn to do to support this student
- what other strategies school staff can use to support and encourage this student.

See the sample plan on pages 24 and 25.

See **Tool P** for an **Individual Behaviour Support Plan** template.

■ *Encourage parents and caregivers to actively participate in developing Individual Behaviour Support Plans.*

Families can participate in the behaviour support planning process by:

- providing information about their child's past experiences and his or her goals, interests and areas of need
- regularly communicating with their child's teachers
- taking an active role in planning for their child
- learning about available services and resources
- working with their child at home to support the goals set through the behaviour support planning process
- actively participating in behaviour support planning meetings.

See **Tool Q** for a reproducible three-page information sheet:

**Tips for Parents: Participating in Behaviour Support Planning.**



**Tool P** Page 61



**Tool Q** Page 63

### Sample Individual Behaviour Support Plan

Name: Sonny (13 years old, Grade 7)

#### Objective of plan

Staff working with **Sonny** will be aware of and committed to using behaviour support procedures to maintain a safe environment for **Sonny**, other students and staff.

Key understandings about <b>Sonny</b>	(Functions of problem behaviour)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Academic pressures increase Sonny's anxiety—he sometimes gets physically aggressive to avoid certain academic tasks, especially in math.</li><li>Sonny often feels that peers are teasing or rejecting him—he sometimes gets physically aggressive to avoid what he perceives as peer rejection.</li><li>Sonny wants to have friends and be respected for his vast knowledge of video games and computers.</li><li>Sonny likes to draw, particularly pictures of action heroes.</li></ul>	

#### Plan

1. Staff working with **Sonny** will read and sign this plan.
2. Be aware of antecedent events. Problem behaviour is most likely to occur when:
  - Sonny is presented with a new assignment, especially in math.
  - Sonny thinks other students are making fun of him or rejecting him.
  - Sonny misunderstands or overreacts to other students' casual comments.
3. Be aware of warning signs that problem behaviour may escalate:
  - Sonny starts talking to himself.
  - Sonny approaches the student he believes is making fun of him or rejecting him.
  - Sonny reaches for a desk or another piece of furniture.
4. Immediate plans to defuse the situation:
  - Redirect by offering to help Sonny; e.g., "What can I do to help you?" or "Let's go for a walk."
  - Give Sonny a problem-solving card with calm-down choices; e.g., breathe deeply, go get a drink, don't react.
  - If necessary, ask other students to quietly leave the area.
  - Once Sonny has calmed down, have him choose one of the calm-down strategies and practise it.
5. Positive behaviour supports throughout the school year:
  - Before asking Sonny to carry out a new activity independently, work with him on a couple of examples to get him started, and then give him opportunities to practise it in a group setting or with a peer.
  - To ensure success, give Sonny structured assignments (e.g., with completed sample, cue cards, reduced number of questions required), particularly in math and when longer writing assignments are required.



cont'd

- Select, teach and practise problem-solving strategies. Record them on a cue card for easy reference.
- Select, teach and practise calm-down strategies. Record them on a cue card for easy reference.
- Help Sonny write a social story dealing with teasing (or perceived teasing).
- Provide verbal praise privately when Sonny uses calm-down strategies.
- Look for opportunities for Sonny to share the computer games and programs he creates with other students.
- Write weekly good news e-mails describing Sonny's recent successes. Before sending them home, review content with Sonny and ask for his input.
- Share successful strategies being used at school so family can try using similar strategies at home.

6. Help peers learn to:

- understand that Sonny may not always understand their intentions
- reduce joking and teasing that can be misinterpreted
- include Sonny in their activities.

7. Staff will provide additional support by:

- incorporating guided practice in calm-down strategies and problem solving for all students across the subject areas and throughout the school day
- encouraging Sonny to join school computer club and providing informal coaching to help him create and maintain positive relationships with peers in this social setting.

**Crisis Management Plan.** If aggressive or unsafe behaviour occurs in spite of proactive strategies, the school plan is to:

- Ask Sonny to leave the classroom and go to Ms. R's room. An adult walks with him.
- If he refuses to leave, hold up the red card and quietly ask the other students to pick up their materials and go to another area; e.g., the library.
- Have Sonny stay in Ms. R's room until he calms down.
- Once he is calm, Sonny identifies, with assistance, another way of dealing with similar incidents in the future by choosing one of his problem-solving strategies.
- Staff debriefs to determine what they could do differently in future.
- Notify Sonny's parents of unsafe incidents. (Mom's cell number is 222-2222.)

I have read this plan and commit to using these supports when working with **Sonny**.

Team members' signatures

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Date

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Review date

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## Action 6

- *Encourage school staff to consider sensory issues related to FASD.*

One of the hallmarks of FASD is sensory issues. These issues differ significantly from individual to individual but can involve strong reactions to specific sounds, tastes, smells or tactile experiences. Some students may be hypersensitive about how their clothes feel or may seek physical comfort in enclosed spaces. An occupational or physical therapist can often provide helpful information about a student's unique sensory needs and how he or she can be accommodated in the classroom.

- *Encourage school staff to build in opportunities for movement throughout the school day.*

One student affected by FASD describes how "hyperness builds up and you just can't control it." Create an understanding of how important it is for these students to be able to discharge this energy. Help school staff identify natural opportunities throughout the school day when students can move without disrupting others or compromising their own safety. For example, they could be assigned special jobs that involve movement such as sweeping the floor or delivering supplies to other classrooms.



Everyone has a role to play in stopping bullying and making our school communities safe and welcoming for all students. Bullying behaviour is hurtful and harmful and is NOT just something that children have to endure as part of growing up. Students with FASD may be especially vulnerable to being bullied and/or developing bullying behaviour. They may be vulnerable because they lack social skills, are easily influenced by peers or have not developed the ability to empathize with others.

It is important for adults to recognize that they may not see the bullying behaviour; it is not always easy to spot bullying in action. In fact, one Canadian study found that bullying incidents tended to be of short duration and average only 38 seconds. Recent research shows that much of bullying behaviour happens without an adult actually witnessing it. That is why we have to rely on good communication with students.

#### If a student is being bullied

Students don't always speak up when they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or afraid the person who is bullying will get back at them. Students sometimes feel they must remain silent in order to belong. Some warning signs that a student may be bullied at school include:

- being afraid to go to school or complaining about feeling ill in the mornings
- skipping school
- coming home with clothes or books destroyed or missing
- coming home with unexplained bruises or cuts
- becoming withdrawn or beginning to bully other children.

If you suspect a student you are working with is being bullied at school, there are several things you can do to help.

#### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

##### ■ *Offer comfort.*

Let the student know you are there to support him or her and that you will do all you can to help him or her feel safe. Let the student know the bullying is not his or her fault. Encourage the student to ask for help and not to stop until he or she gets it.

##### ■ *Work with the school.*

When there is a bullying concern, encourage the family to contact the school immediately to make sure the situation will be monitored so their child is safe. If the family is reluctant to approach the school on their own, you could offer either to accompany them for support or to speak to the school on their behalf.

##### ■ *Make arrangements for safety.*

If the bullying happens on the way to school, work with the family and school staff to arrange for the student to go with older, supportive students, or have an adult take him or her to school until the threat of bullying is gone.

Help the student develop strategies for avoiding vulnerable situations. Encourage him or her to stay with friends on the playground and in the hallway, and avoid isolated areas such as empty classrooms or areas of the playground that are far away from supervisors.

■ *Practise effective responses.*

Work with the student to practise what to say and do when someone is bullying him or her. For example, the student could say, “Stop it. I don’t like it” firmly and walk away and get help. Encourage students to stay calm and not to fight back. The person who is bullying wants attention and fighting back gives him or her what he or she wants. Fighting back can also make the situation worse.

■ *Encourage the student to connect with positive peers.*

Students who are isolated tend to be the ones who get bullied. Encourage the student to participate in clubs or social groups that share similar interests and that will be a positive support.

**Preventing and stopping bullying behaviour**

Bullying is destructive—not just for the students being bullied, but also for those who witness bullying and/or demonstrate bullying behaviour. Recognizing bullying in children and youth is an important step in stopping and preventing the emotional, physical and social scars that can last a lifetime. Bullying is not a discipline problem, it’s a relationship problem. Bullying is a learned behaviour, and students need help in fostering more positive relationships. The following may contribute to bullying behaviour:

- mental or physical abuse
- exposure to excessive violence through media or games
- lack of supervision when interacting with peers
- difficult temperament, attention problems, hyperactivity
- family stress
- lack of positive role models
- past experience of being bullied
- lack of attention, rejection or marginalized feelings.

Here are some possible indicators of bullying behaviour:

- lack of empathy—not understanding or caring if someone is hurt
- extra money, clothes or boasting about taunting someone
- passing off teasing someone as a joke
- children or youth grouping together and intentionally leaving others out
- aggressive behaviour with peers, such as yelling, hitting or throwing

- laughing when others get hurt
- name calling of siblings or friends
- aggressive, angry behaviour towards family, school staff or other adults.

If you are working with a student that you suspect is demonstrating bullying behaviour at school, there are several things you can do to help.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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■ *Be a positive role model.*

Recognize your role in modelling positive relationships. Set a good example and reinforce positive, empathetic behaviour when you see it.

■ *Communicate.*

A student who is engaging in bullying behaviour needs to be able to talk about his or her own experiences. Establish an open, friendly, nonthreatening line of communication. See the child inside the bully. Try to find out what the student is feeling, and if something has happened to make him or her feel vulnerable.

■ *Teach empathy.*

Look for opportunities to talk about bullying. Use examples from real life, movies and television, and identify how each person feels. Help the student to see the other person's point of view, and how hurtful and damaging bullying can be.

■ *Do something fun together.*

Fun activities and positive attention build confidence, positive pathways, and encourage empathy and compassion for others.

■ *Create opportunities for leadership.*

Look for activities and everyday opportunities that channel energy into constructive leadership opportunities.

■ *Help students make amends and be friends.*

Coach the student on ways to make amends for past behaviour (e.g., to apologize, or to do something helpful or kind), and help him or her connect with others who have similar interests.

■ *Work together.*

Talk with the parents and encourage them to work with the school to monitor the situation. By working together, caring adults can foster a school climate where every student can feel cared for and safe.

The information in this section is adapted from fact sheets posted on the Bully Free Alberta website at <http://www.bullyfree.alberta.ca/>. Please visit the website for more information and ideas on how you can help create a bully-free Alberta.

One of the most important ways to create a positive, hopeful outlook is to help students feel a sense of connectedness. Connectedness can mean different things for different students, whether it is having friends in the classroom, belonging to a club, feeling passionate about an activity or caring for a pet. The important thing is that students feel like they are “part of something positive, something larger than themselves” (Hallowell and Ratey 2005, p. 183).

Many students with FASD will experience lifelong social skill problems. Look for natural opportunities to help these students form authentic and positive relationships with other students in the classroom and throughout the school community. Connecting with peers who have positive attitudes towards school and regular attendance can be particularly helpful for older students.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

■ *Help students identify positive peer role models in each class or school situation.*

Encourage families and school staff to discuss with the student what you might see when someone is:

- getting along with others
- cooperating with the teacher
- working independently.

Encourage the student to name individual students in the classroom who demonstrate these kinds of behaviours. Discuss how these identified students can be role models for times when the student with FASD is confused about what to do next in a classroom activity or unsure how to behave in a new situation. Also help the student identify peers that he or she can ask for help. Make a diagram that illustrates who is in the student’s circle of friends at school.

See **Tool R** for a **Circle of Friends** template.

■ *Help school staff identify natural opportunities for peer support.*

Encourage school staff to consider opportunities throughout the school day when the student with FASD might benefit from the support and/or companionship of a peer. For example:

- a transition buddy (or rotating buddies) who walks with the student from class to class
- a homework buddy to call if they have questions about an assignment
- a member of the sports team who will provide informal coaching and feedback in new situations such as travelling on the bus for out-of-town games or coping with good-natured teasing from other teammates.



Tool R Page 66

The support of a peer can be the most natural and the least intrusive accommodation for a student and can help that student begin to build authentic connections and positive relationships with others. To form these relationships, some students will need explicit and ongoing coaching on how to be a friend.

- *Help students and their families identify opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities at school.*

Research shows that students who feel connected to the school community through extracurricular activities are more likely to stay in school and graduate. Brainstorm ways to provide needed supports during these less-structured times, particularly when the student first begins a new activity. The support could be as subtle as the coach working out a few social cues with the student (e.g., when the coach sees that the student needs to calm himself or herself down, the coach offers a subtle cue such as taping a “Keep calm” sign on the wall) or as intensive as a family member volunteering to accompany the team on all off-site games.

Some students will benefit from preteaching before an activity. They might need to start off in smaller time chunks, building up to full participation.

- *Help school staff recognize the value of participation in extracurricular activities.*

Students need to participate in activities that are meaningful to them. Participation in activities should not be contingent on factors outside the activity; e.g., completed homework, marks on a test, behaviour in class. Taking away the right to participate as a punishment is not logical and will create misunderstanding and resentment. The activity might be the one thing the student is good at or looks forward to. It could be what is keeping the student connected to school.



Help students and their parents/caregivers and teachers become aware of the circle of support that is created by caring adults in the school community.

### **SAMPLE STRATEGIES**

- *Encourage students and parents/caregivers and/or school staff to identify adults who are part of the school community and have frequent contact with the student.*

Talk about how each of these individuals currently helps the student. For example:

- “Betty, the bus driver, takes me to school every morning.”
- “Mrs. Sparks, the lunchroom supervisor, lets me sit with John at lunch.”
- “Ms. Love, the principal, always asks me how I am doing.”

Ask the student for ideas about other kinds of things that adult might be able to do to help them. For example:

- “Betty, the bus driver, could make sure Theo doesn’t sit near me because when no one is looking he always hits me on the head with his backpack.”
- “Mrs. Sparks, the lunchroom supervisor, could remind me to put my lunch bag back in my knapsack after lunch. I forget it almost every day.”
- “Ms. Love, the principal, could phone my auntie and tell her I’m doing good at recess and I don’t have any problems playing soccer anymore.”

- *Consider sharing these student-generated ideas for increased support with the adults involved.*

Depending on the developmental level of the student, he or she might be able to do this on his or her own, with a little adult coaching and support. In other cases, the parent/caregiver or the teacher might be the most appropriate person to discuss these ideas with the adults.

Consider what other information (e.g., about FASD, about this individual student) each of these adults might need to better understand and support the student.

- *Encourage parents and caregivers to help their child identify his or her circle of support in school.*

The student could create a visual reminder by creating a drawing that shows all the adults in the school community who are in the student’s circle of support.

See **Tool S** for a **Circle of Support** template.

Students could identify which adults they are most comfortable talking with by marking their name with a star. These could be the people they go to when they are frustrated or have a problem.



**Tool S** Page 67

A transition is any event that results in changes to relationships, routines, expectations or roles. Transitions are a normal part of life and occur throughout the life cycle. Starting school, moving from grade to grade and changing schools are common transitions for children.

While any student can have difficulty with transitions, students with FASD may have greater difficulty coping with transitions. To minimize these difficulties, thoughtful transition planning is important.

Transition planning decisions need to be based on an understanding of the individual student. This means understanding the student's strengths, needs and goals, as well as those of the student's family. Transition planning is dynamic and ongoing. Planning needs to involve community service providers, parents, school staff and the student.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Encourage parents and caregivers to help students write a letter to their new teacher as they prepare to move from one grade or one school to another.

Alternatively, students could make an *All About Me* chart to give to their new teacher.

See **Tool T** for an *All About Me* template.

- Encourage parents and caregivers to share their hopes and wishes for their child.

Share tools, such as *Three Wishes for My Child*, that families could use to communicate their hopes and dreams about their child's future.

See **Tool U** for a *Three Wishes for My Child* template.



Tool T Page 68



Tool U Page 69



- Share information on transition planning with both parents and caregivers and school staff.

There are a number of resources related to transition planning available on the Government of Alberta website, including:

- Chapter 8: Planning for Transitions in *Individualized Program Planning* (2006) (<http://education.alberta.ca/media/525543/ipp8.pdf>)
- *Building on Success: Helping Students Make Transitions from Year to Year* (2006) (<http://education.alberta.ca/media/352661/build.pdf>)
- *Planning for Post-secondary Studies* series (<http://alis.gov.ab.ca/hs/ep/pps/planning/publication-links.html>)
  - Grade Five/Six Student Guide (2007)
  - Grade Nine Student Guide (2004)
  - Grade Twelve Student Guide (2004)
  - Grade Six Parent Guide (2004)
  - Grade Nine Parent Guide (2004)
  - Grade Twelve Parent Guide (2004)
- <http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/ep/pps/planning/disability.html>  
This website offers several resources (videos, transition planning guides and electronic slide show presentations) for students with learning or physical disabilities, their parents and interested educators and professionals.
- *ACYI Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Disabilities: Your Guide to Reaching New Heights* (2007) (<http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/DisabilitySupports/documents/TransitionPlanningProtocol.pdf>)
- *Guidelines for Supporting Successful Transitions for Children and Youth* (2006) ([http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/documents/youthprograms/Guidelines\\_for\\_Supporting\\_Successful\\_Transitions\\_for\\_Children\\_and\\_Youth.pdf](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/home/documents/youthprograms/Guidelines_for_Supporting_Successful_Transitions_for_Children_and_Youth.pdf)).

Help families and school staff establish open lines of communication. Both school staff and families need to consider homework from a student's perspective.

Consider what Myles Himmelreich, a young man impacted by FASD, has to say about his homework experience:

"It was frustrating for me trying to do homework. By the time I sat down to do it, I had forgotten the steps the teacher taught me at school. My parents would try and show me the steps but they were different steps from what the teacher used. I did not understand what my parents were saying and I would become angry and frustrated. I could do it fine at school earlier in the day but now at home, I could not. It was like I was right there but couldn't reach it."

Offer samples of positively-focused home-school communication books. Help families establish homework routines that work for them and their children.

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

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■ *Help families and school staff establish lines of communication.*

Share a questionnaire, such as the *Let's Stay In Touch* sample letter, for school staff to use to find out the best ways to communicate with individual families.

Questionnaires encourage parents and teachers to discuss:

- how often they need to be in contact
- the best way to reach each other (e.g., phone, e-mail, notes)
- the best times to reach each other
- what they need to communicate about.

See Tool V for a *Let's Stay in Touch* template.



Tool V Page 70



■ *Offer ideas for positively-focused home-school communication books.*

Some families may wish to have daily communication with school staff. A home-school communication book may be the most practical way to do this. To ensure that the communication is clear, positive and focused, encourage families and school staff to identify specific behaviours and issues they will communicate on. A checklist may be a good solution—this format tends to be manageable for the school staff and the structure encourages consistent and objective reporting. A checklist format also keeps the focus on specific behaviours that have been identified as important.

In addition, communication books can include information on upcoming events, changes in routes or other school news.

The goal of home-school communication books should be encouragement rather than punishment. Home-school communication books are most effective when school staff are committed to keeping the reports as positive as possible, recognizing that neither parents and caregivers nor students need the discouragement of continual “bad news.” See the sample formats in the related tools noted below.

See **Tool W** for the **Daily Report** template and **Tool X** for the **My School Day Report** template.

■ *Look for strategies that will make managing communication between home and school a hassle-free process.*

Ensuring that written communication goes safely back and forth between home and school can be challenging. There are creative solutions that can make this routine easier on everyone, including parents and school staff.

If the student is having difficulty remembering to take communications between home and school, use alternative strategies such as the following:

- Designate a special plastic labeled envelope for this purpose and attach it to the student’s homework agenda.
- Add the daily report or homework materials to a list of items that the student checks off before leaving school at the end of the day.
- When possible, fax or e-mail communications directly to the student’s home. This can be especially effective for time-sensitive documents such as permission slips for field trips.

Another strategy for ensuring that the student is more likely to bring a communication home is to include positive comments about the student (and making sure the student knows about these comments before he or she leaves school).



Tool W/X Page 71/72

**■ Help parents develop a plan for managing homework.**

Homework can be a challenge for many families of students with FASD. Encourage parents to do the following:

- set up a regular time for homework or develop a weekly homework schedule
- provide a quiet workspace and keep it stocked with needed materials
- review the recorded assignments with the child
- use this time to build a positive, supportive relationship with their child
- assist the child in planning the tasks that need to be completed
- work cooperatively with the child
- schedule breaks or reward partially completed tasks with a break
- emphasize the positive by looking for things the child has done correctly and giving positive feedback
- let the teacher know if the homework is too confusing or difficult for the child to do or if it is taking too long. A general rule of thumb is a maximum of 10 minutes per grade; e.g., Grade 3 student, no more than 30 minutes, including short breaks every 15 minutes or so.

If homework becomes an ongoing issue for families, encourage parents to talk to the teacher about alternate solutions.

For some students and families, the best solution might be no homework if it causes undue stress and tension.



Advocacy is the action of an individual or group of people to bring about positive change in people's lives. Students with FASD need caring adults in their lives who will work to ensure that their unique needs are understood and that they receive the support necessary to live a safe, satisfying and successful life.

## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

■ *Be an effective advocate for students and families by:*

- assuming the best of others
- modelling the kinds of behaviour you are advocating for
- being open-minded
- acting in the spirit of children first
- working as part of a team—with parents and caregivers, with school staff and with other community service providers
- believing in collective wisdom and respecting differing perspectives and beliefs
- being willing to compromise
- remaining focused on solutions
- making the time you spend with others a positive time.<sup>5</sup>

■ *Do your research and find out who has the responsibility and authority to make the changes or decisions that will make a positive difference for the student.*

When parents and caregivers believe something needs to change for their child, encourage them to approach first the people who work directly with the student—teachers, the counsellor, the principal. Agree on a length of time to try these changes and when progress will be reviewed. If these strategies and interventions just aren't working, encourage the parents and caregivers to ask the principal about next steps; the process for review and/or consultation may vary from school jurisdiction to school jurisdiction.

■ *Focus your efforts.*

And finally, when choosing what to advocate for, consider the wise advice of educator and social activist Jonathan Kozol to pick "battles large enough to matter, small enough to win."

# Tools

A	Answering Basic Questions about FASD	40
B	Chronological-age versus Developmental-age Expectations	44
C	Making Mental Shifts about Students with FASD	45
D	Interest Inventory	46
E	Parent Survey	47
F	My Child Through My Eyes	48
G	Top Three for My Child	49
H	My Strengths Inventory	50
I	Individual Student Support Plan	51
J	Parents' Tips for Helping Their Child Feel Better	53
K	Feeling Better	54
L	How I Learn Inventory	55
M	Solution-focused Meetings Tip Sheet	57
N	Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting	58
O	Resources for Teaching and Supporting Students with FASD	59
P	Individual Behaviour Support Plan	61
Q	Tips for Parents: Participating in Behaviour Support Planning	63
R	Circle of Friends	66
S	Circle of Support	67
T	All About Me	68
U	Three Wishes for My Child	69
V	Let's Stay in Touch	70
W	Daily Report	71
X	My School Day Report	72

### What is FASD?

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a pattern of difficulties that is a result of brain damage caused by alcohol use during pregnancy. These difficulties may be intellectual, behavioural and/or physical. Students with FASD exhibit a wide range of intellectual levels and disabilities that reflect differing degrees of brain damage. The patterns of FASD are unique to the individual. Mental disability is just one of a range of effects of this type of brain damage. Some students with FASD may learn well in school but may have behavioural or social difficulties in other areas of life. Some of the general characteristics of school-aged children with FASD include:

- difficulty listening, paying attention and working with others
- appearing to know something one day, forgetting it the next and then knowing it again after several days
- being highly verbal but often misinterpreting what others are saying
- difficulty learning concepts, organizing, sequencing, problem solving and developing age-appropriate social skills
- difficulty making and keeping friends because of their behavioural difficulties.

People with FASD do not outgrow the effects over time. As they grow older they may also experience difficulty evaluating situations and using past experiences to cope with current problems. They may need different degrees of protection, supervision and structure throughout their lives, especially as teenagers and young adults.

### How is FASD different from other exceptionalities?

FASD is a form of brain damage that can make it difficult for students to keep up with others in school or perform activities in daily life. Individuals with FASD often demonstrate:

- impulsiveness
- poor judgement, social skills and organizational skills
- difficulty recognizing and setting boundaries
- good verbal skills but poor follow-through.

Students with FASD often recognize that they are different and that they are “just not getting it.” Adolescents and adults with FASD are at risk of developing emotional problems, such as depression. They are also at risk of developing behaviour problems, such as lying and defiance. Because they can often be easily led and manipulated, they may develop serious social problems including alcohol abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. A diagnosis can be a protective factor for these students; if they receive a medical diagnosis of FASD (and the understanding and support that goes along with this diagnosis), they are less likely to develop secondary disabilities such as conduct disorders or drug dependency.

One of the biggest differences between FASD and other exceptionalities—and one of the most frustrating aspects of this condition—is that many students with FASD have a great deal of difficulty learning from experience. As a result, consequences that may work well with most students, may not be meaningful for some students with FASD. Typical behavioural programs may not benefit some of these students.

### **Could a student have FASD and we not know about it?**

Yes. In many ways, FASD is an invisible condition. Because the most obvious symptoms of FASD are often behavioural ones, people don't always look for a medical cause. Although there are several distinct physical characteristics that doctors use to help diagnose FASD, people with this disability are affected in different ways and may look quite typical. Physical symptoms are not an indicator of the severity of brain damage, rather they indicate at what point in the pregnancy the unborn baby was exposed to alcohol (through the mother's drinking).

Even when FASD is suspected, it's challenging to diagnose this syndrome because:

- there is no one symptom that can identify FASD
- there are no specific tests to diagnose FASD
- many FASD symptoms are hard to see in babies
- these children are often not living with their birth parents, making it difficult to confirm the mother's alcohol use during pregnancy
- the symptoms of FASD can also be symptoms of other problems.

For these reasons, all other causes of physical and behavioural problems have to be ruled out before children can be diagnosed with FASD. Over the last few years, there has been more research and training for multidisciplinary assessment teams so they can recognize and diagnose this condition more accurately.

### **What can I do if I suspect a student has FASD?**

The school can do an educational and psychological assessment of the individual student and look for immediate ways to support this student. If warranted, school staff can use information from these assessments to encourage the families to seek further medical and psychological assessment, often beginning with the family physician.

FASD is a medical condition that must be diagnosed by a qualified team of health professionals. It is not appropriate for school staff to attempt to investigate, diagnose or label the student's learning and behavioural difficulties as FASD.

A diagnosis of FASD can serve as a protective factor for students and their families. Understanding the characteristics and needs of students with FASD helps parents and school staff adjust expectations, build a supportive environment and better meet the developmental needs of these children.

## What can I tell other students and parents about students with FASD?

Like any medical or family background information, a student's diagnosis of FASD is confidential information and cannot be the subject of discussion with other students or parents.

Schools need to focus on creating inclusive and supportive learning environments in which individual differences are respected and accommodated. Students need opportunities to work together, and they need to be encouraged and to learn how to show empathy and support for one another.

## What can schools do to support these students?

School staff need to be aware of the individual needs and strengths of these students, and provide a safe, structured and supportive environment with appropriate levels of supervision, clear guidance and reasonable behavioural expectations.

In the classroom, these students need appropriate levels of support. They also need strategies to accommodate any memory, language or academic difficulties they may have. And like all students, they need opportunities to be successful, to belong and to contribute to the school community.

## What kind of support do teachers of these students need?

Teachers need opportunities to build their understanding of what having FASD means to these students and their families. Teachers also need the support and expertise of a collaborative team, including the school administrator. Often students with FASD have challenging behaviours and special learning needs that require a team approach. Teachers may also need access to additional professional development and consultants.

For more information and sample teaching strategies, see *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope* at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/fasd.aspx>.

## What can schools do to prevent FASD?

The only way to prevent alcohol-related birth defects is supporting women to not drink alcohol during their pregnancies. Schools can provide information to students on FASD and the adverse effects of alcohol on the unborn baby. This information can be included in the Health and Life Skills program. Providing students with opportunities to develop strategies for managing emotions and feelings, making personal decisions, building a circle of support and making positive life choices can serve as a protective factor against future alcohol abuse.

For sample teaching ideas, see *Teaching for the Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder* at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/fasd.aspx>.

## What can schools do to enlist the support of families of students with FASD?

Parents play a critical role in their children's daily lives and can help school staff understand their children's behaviours and needs.

School staff may be able to offer support and assistance to parents in the following areas:

- setting realistic goals and expectations for their children
- keeping a positive focus on their children's strengths and accomplishments
- facilitating referrals to other agencies, such as health and social services
- finding parent support groups and/or counselling with knowledgeable individuals
- encouraging parents to participate in specialized parenting courses, such as those dealing with the parenting of children with behavioural challenges.

For sample information to share with parents, see *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/fasd.aspx>.

Some parents may be reluctant to work with school staff for a number of reasons including economic or health difficulties, or a history of negative school experiences. It is essential that school staff encourage these families to actively participate in their children's education by:

- trying a range of ways to contact them
- continuing to invite parents to come to school
- asking for the help of a parent advocate, family service agency worker or group already involved with the family, such as a health agency or Child and Family Services
- maintaining a positive, understanding and nonjudgemental approach, even when the situation is challenging
- recognizing that parents have valuable information and insight about their own children.

A significant percentage of children identified with FASD are not living with their birth parents; they may be living with other family members or in foster care. Some of these families may still be struggling with alcohol abuse and some birth mothers may have FASD themselves. Many students rely on school being a safe and structured place where they can learn and feel like they belong.

Chronological age-appropriate expectations	Developmental age-appropriate expectations
<b>Age 5</b> Be in school all day Follow three instructions Sit still for 20 minutes Participate in interactive and cooperative play Take turns and share	<b>Age 5 going on 2 developmentally</b> Take naps during day Follow one instruction Active, sit still for 5–10 minutes Parallel play “My way or no way” attitude
<b>Age 6</b> Listen, pay attention for 30–60 minutes Read and write Line up on their own Wait their turn Remember events and requests	<b>Age 6 going on 3 developmentally</b> Pay attention for about 10 minutes Scribble Need to be shown and reminded Don’t wait gracefully, act impulsively Require reminders about tasks
<b>Age 10</b> Read books without pictures Learn from worksheets Answer abstract questions Structure their own play at recess Get along and solve problems Learn inferentially Know right from wrong Have physical stamina	<b>Age 10 going on 6 developmentally</b> Beginning to read, with pictures Learn experientially Mirror and echo words, behaviours Require supervised play, structured play Learn from modelled problem solving Learn by doing, experiential Developing sense of fairness Easily fatigued by mental work
<b>Age 13</b> Act responsibly Organize themselves, plan ahead, follow through Meet deadlines after being told once Initiate, follow through Have appropriate social boundaries Understand body space Establish and maintain friendships	<b>Age 13 going on 8 developmentally</b> Need reminding Need visual cues, modelling Comply with simple expectations Need prompting Kinesthetic, tactile, lots of touching In your space Forming early friendships
<b>Age 18</b> On the verge of independence Maintain a job and graduate from school Have a plan for their lives Form relationships, safe sexual behaviour Budget their money Organize, accomplish tasks at home, school, job	<b>Age 18 going on 10 developmentally</b> Need structure and guidance Limited choices of activities Live in the “now,” little projection into the future Easily led, impulsive and sometimes inappropriate sexual behaviour Need an allowance Need to be organized by adults, limited self-management

This chart is adapted with permission from Diane Malbin, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder: A Five-part Set of Information for Parents and Professionals; Set Five: Master Set: Collection of Set One Through Four* (Portland, OR: FASCATS, Inc., 1999), pp. 33–34.

<b>From seeing the student as ...</b>	<b>To understanding the student as ...</b>
Won't	Can't
Bad, annoying	Frustrated, challenged
Lazy, unmotivated	Trying hard, tired of failing
Lying	Storytelling to compensate for memory
Fussy	Hypersensitive
Acting young	Developmentally younger
Trying to get attention	Needing contact, support
Inappropriate	Displaying behaviours of young child
Not trying	Exhausted or can't get started
Mean	Defensive, hurt
Not caring	Unable to show feeling
Refusing to sit still	Overstimulated, overwhelmed
Resisting	Doesn't "get it," lacks understanding
Trying to annoy me	Can't remember
Showing off	Needing contact, acceptance
<b>From personal feelings of ...</b>	<b>To feelings of ...</b>
Hopelessness	Hope
Fear	Understanding
Chaos, confusion	Organization, comprehension
Power struggles	Working with
Isolation	Networking, collaboration
<i>Rethinking FASD can shift how school staff see their roles and relationships with students. It could result in professional shifts such as the examples below.</i>	
<b>Professional shifts from ...</b>	<b>To ...</b>
Stopping behaviours	Preventing problems by identifying what student needs
Behaviour modification	Modelling, using visual cues
Changing people	Changing environments
Teaching one way	Teaching many ways many times

This chart is adapted with permission from Diane Malbin, "Paradigm Shifts and FASD" (Portland, OR: FASCETS, Inc., 1997, revised 2006) and from Diane Malbin, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol-related Neurodevelopmental Disorders: Trying Differently Rather than Harder* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) (Portland, OR: FASCETS, Inc., 1999, 2002), p. 42.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. My favourite subject is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. My most challenging subject is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What I like best about school is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What I don't like about school is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
5. Books I like to read \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Activities I do outside of school \_\_\_\_\_.
  
7. Three words to describe me \_\_\_\_\_.
8. What I want to be when I grow up \_\_\_\_\_.
9. My favourite television shows are \_\_\_\_\_.
  
10. My favourite websites are \_\_\_\_\_.
  
11. Some interesting places I've been are \_\_\_\_\_.
12. If I could travel anywhere, I would like to go to \_\_\_\_\_.
13. If I can't watch television, I like to \_\_\_\_\_.
14. I would like to learn more about \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

The following questions are designed to help school staff better understand your child's learning needs. We value your input and invite you to think about the following questions in preparation for the learning team meeting.

1. What are your child's strengths and interests?
2. Describe successes your child had in school.
3. Describe any challenges your child had in school.
4. What are your child's learning needs for this school year? (These could be skills that your child needs to acquire or improve on.)
5. What has helped your child be successful at school in the past?
6. What type of learner is your child? How does your child learn best?
7. What has your child's experience been with homework?
8. Describe behaviours that are of concern to you. Please explain how you deal with this type of behaviour at home.
9. What are your goals and hopes for your child this school year?
10. Where do you see your child five years from now?
11. Is there any other information that could help us gain a better understanding of your child?
12. Are there any specific concerns that you would like us to address at this upcoming meeting? If so, please explain.

Thank you for sharing your ideas.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Three words to describe my child:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My child's strengths and talents:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My child's needs and challenges:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How my child handles change:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things that help my child:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

3 things my child did well this year:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 things that worked well for us this year:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 challenges we've faced this year:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 hopes I have for my child next year:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

A. 4 things you did this year that you are proud of:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

B. 4 everyday things you do well:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

C. 2 things you could teach someone else:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

D. 10 positive words to describe yourself:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

E. 2 things that really matter to you:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

F. 2 things you can do for yourself that will always make you feel good:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

G. 2 people who you can count on for help and support:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

This inventory is adapted from Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), p. 84.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher-Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Reading Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Math Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject teachers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The following is a list of accommodations that may assist in student learning. Only those checked pertain to this student. Please feel free to add any accommodations that you have found to be helpful and to contact the teacher-advisor if you have questions or suggestions.

#### A. Seating

- seat at front of class
- seat at back of class
- locate near teacher
- seat away from distractions
- allow student to stand or kneel rather than sit
- provide alternate workspace

#### B. Instructional Presentation

- adapt pace of lesson
- highlight key points of information
- provide regular review time in class
- provide examples completed by other students
- colour code print material
- break information into smaller steps
- photocopy notes

#### C. Assignment Completion

- allow extra time (if the student is able to complete the task)
- cover parts of worksheet
- increase white space for answers
- reduce amount of information/questions on the page
- ensure student records information in agenda
- provide weekly list of homework/reading assignments
- allow use of calculator
- provide checklist of steps to complete activity
- use computer to complete assignments

#### D. Attention Support

- reduce materials on desk
- provide buddy to clarify missed information
- use nonverbal or verbal sign to cue student
- provide checklist for organizational tasks

#### E. Behaviour Support

- provide buddy to model appropriate behaviour
- use agenda to communicate with other teachers
- provide positive reinforcement such as \_\_\_\_\_
- create opportunities for breaks (e.g., for water, to the library)

This checklist is adapted with permission from the work of January Baugh, Deb Rawlings and Carrie-Anne Bauche, Medicine Hat High School (Medicine Hat, Alberta, 2005).

**F. Reading Support**

- allow extra time
- buddy reading
- shared reading with trained peers or volunteers
- use of text-to-speech software

**G. Writing Support**

Reduce writing demands through:

- use of word processor (including spellcheck)
- allowing point form to replace paragraphs
- providing copies of notes and teaching students to identify and highlight main ideas
- providing graphic organizers for planning

**H. Assessment and Evaluation Procedures**

- smaller chunks of information or simpler concepts
- use individual criteria to evaluate tasks
- use notes or textbook during tests
- allow extra time on tests
- use of word processor
- clarify directions

**Medical Issues**


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- There are no current medical issues relevant to this student's learning.

**Individual Information****Teacher Assistant**

Does this student receive the support of a Teacher Assistant?

 Yes       No

Name of Teacher Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

## Check the types of tasks required:

<input type="checkbox"/> record class notes	<input type="checkbox"/> troubleshoot assistive technology
<input type="checkbox"/> monitor student understanding of content	<input type="checkbox"/> monitor student's on-task behaviour
<input type="checkbox"/> reteach concepts	<input type="checkbox"/> track assignment (know what is due, when it is due, that student is handing work in)
<input type="checkbox"/> monitor progress on assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> monitor and organize binders/materials
<input type="checkbox"/> read and explain text and handouts with student	<input type="checkbox"/> deal with minor discipline issues/report larger issues to teacher
<input type="checkbox"/> report to teacher any important information on student's progress/understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher assistant availability _____
<input type="checkbox"/> support small group work	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> scribe for student	_____

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If your child is feeling **sad**, what kinds of things might help make him or her feel better?

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If your child is feeling **angry**, what kinds of things might help make him or her feel calmer?

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If your child is feeling **frustrated**, what kinds of things might help him or her feel better?

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If your child is feeling **worried** or **anxious**, what kinds of things might help him or her feel more confident?

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If your child is feeling **overexcited**, what kinds of things might help him or her calm down?

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

If I'm feeling sad → this is what could help me feel better



If I'm feeling angry → this is what could help me feel better



If I'm feeling frustrated → this is what could help me feel better



If I'm feeling worried → this is what could help me feel better



If I'm feeling overexcited → this is what could help me feel calm



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

1. Rate how well each of these ways to learn works for you.
  - a. teacher explains aloud Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - b. teacher writes what to do on the board Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - c. teacher does example on the board Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - d. teacher asks another student to show what to do Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - e. teacher asks all students to try a sample at their desks Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - f. I read the directions while the teacher reads them Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - g. I read the directions on my own Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - h. teacher shows me at my desk Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - i. another student explains a second time and answers my questions Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - j. I watch what another student does Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - k. I try it on my own and then check with the teacher Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
  - l. I try it on my own and then compare with another student Works well for me!  Sometimes works  Never works
2. Tricks I use to keep myself organized:

## 2. Tricks I use to keep myself organized:

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3. Tricks I use to keep myself focused and on task in class:

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4. Special things that teachers can do to help me learn:

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Solution-focused meetings can be an effective way to resolve particularly difficult situations or to promote communication among all learning team members. Ensuring input from all members of the learning team in an open, honest and respectful manner will contribute to increased commitment to an action plan by school staff, parents and the student.

A solution-focused meeting uses a process such as the following.

1. One member of the learning team agrees to act as the facilitator for the meeting. This individual needs to be positive, attentive, task-oriented, and be able to clarify issues and summarize. It is also important that the facilitator help each team member stay on topic and work toward appropriate, practical solutions.
2. The facilitator begins the meeting by inviting the learning team member who initiated the meeting to state clearly and concisely what the concern is. It is important to find out specifically what the team member wants to happen as a result of this meeting.
3. The team members ask questions to clear up any uncertainties they may have as to exactly what the issue is or what the related circumstances are. The facilitator may need to encourage team members to look for factors that appear to trigger or contribute to the problem, and to identify and analyze conditions that seem to alleviate the problem. As part of this analysis, team members may also identify available resources and the strengths of the student.
4. The team then discusses “What would the situation look like if this problem were solved?” This focuses the discussion on positive outcomes such as “John would come to school every day,” or “Mary would have friends.”
5. Once the problem or issue is clearly defined and positive outcomes identified, the team brainstorms ideas for *how* the problem may be solved. All ideas are recorded on chart paper. It is important at this stage of the process to let ideas flow freely and not to comment directly on any one idea.
6. The facilitator and the referring teacher review the strategies together and then rate each suggestion by assigning a number value to it.

For example:

- 1 = an idea or strategy that the teacher and/or parent wants to try
- 2 = an idea or strategy that has merit, but is not a priority
- 3 = an idea or strategy that has already been tried and didn't seem to resolve the issue
- 4 = an idea or strategy not immediately practical at this time.

7. The learning team develops an action plan for each strategy selected, including materials and resources required, persons responsible, and dates for follow-up and review.
8. The facilitator closes the meeting by thanking everyone and asking for feedback on the process. The team generally agrees to meet for a progress review in four to six weeks.

These tips adapted with permission from Gordon L. Porter et al., “Problem Solving Teams: A Thirty-Minute Peer-Helping Model,” in Gordon L. Porter and Diane Richler (eds.), *Changing Canadian Schools: Perspectives on Disability and Inclusion* (North York, ON: The Roeher Institute, 1991), pp. 224–228.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Referring learning team member \_\_\_\_\_

Learning team members participating in meeting

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## A. Key concern

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## B. What we would like to see happen/change

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## C. Description of student's strengths and priority areas of need

Strengths	Areas of need	Resources to meet these needs

## D. Potential strategies

## What can make this happen?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## E. Follow-up meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Alberta Education. *Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2008. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/behaviour.aspx>.

Alberta Education. *Focusing on Success: Teaching Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2006. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/adhd.aspx>.

Alberta Education. *Building on Success: Helping Students Make Transitions from Year to Year*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2006. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/media/352661/build.pdf>.

Alberta Education. *Individualized Program Planning*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education, 2006. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/ipp.aspx>.

Alberta Learning. *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2004. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/fasd.aspx>.

Alberta Learning. *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2003. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/special/resources/learningteam.aspx>.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. *Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences: A Resource Guide for Teachers*. Victoria, BC: Special Programs Branch, British Columbia Ministry of Education, undated. An HTML version is available at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/landbdif/>.

Edmonton and Area Fetal Alcohol Network. *FASD: Strategies Not Solutions*. Edmonton, AB: Edmonton and Area Fetal Alcohol Network, 2007. PDF copies are available for downloading at [www.region6fasd.ca](http://www.region6fasd.ca).

Lasser, Peggy. *Challenges and Opportunities: A Handbook for Teachers of Students with Special Needs with a Focus on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (pFAS)*. Vancouver, BC: Vancouver School Board, 1999. Print copies are available from the FAS Bookshelf, Inc., 19422 Cusick Crescent, Pitt Meadows, B.C., V3Y 2M9; telephone (604) 460-1050, fax (604) 459-2405.

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. *Towards Inclusion: Tapping Hidden Strengths: Planning for Students Who Are Alcohol-affected*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, 2001. PDF copies are available for downloading at <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/fas/index.html>.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Reach to Teach: Educating Elementary and Middle School Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*. Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2007. PDF copies are available for downloading at [http://www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/Reach\\_To\\_Teach\\_Final\\_011107.pdf](http://www.fasdcenter.samhsa.gov/documents/Reach_To_Teach_Final_011107.pdf).

Yukon Education. *Making a Difference: Working with Students Who Have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*. Whitehorse, YT: Yukon Education, 2006. PDF copies are available for downloading at [http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/fasd\\_manual\\_2007.pdf](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/fasd_manual_2007.pdf).

Alberta Learning Information System (ALIS) website at <http://alis.alberta.ca/ec/ep/pps/planning/disability.html>

This website lists several useful resources about transitions to post-secondary education (videos, planning guides and electronic slide show presentations) for students with learning or physical disabilities, their parents and interested educators and professionals.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Objective of plan

Staff working with \_\_\_\_\_ will be aware of and committed to using behaviour support procedures to maintain a safe learning environment for \_\_\_\_\_, other students and staff.

Key understandings about \_\_\_\_\_ **(Functions of problem behaviour)**

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### Plan

1. Staff working with \_\_\_\_\_ will read and sign this plan.

2. Be aware of antecedent events. Problem behaviour is most likely to occur when:

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3. Be aware of warning signs that problem behaviour may escalate:

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4. Immediate plans to defuse the situation:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

5. Positive behaviour supports throughout the school year:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. Help peers learn to:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. Staff will provide additional support by:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Crisis Management Plan.** If aggressive or unsafe behaviour occurs in spite of proactive strategies, the school has a plan, with steps to take and staff responses for each level of escalation.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

I have read this plan and commit to using these supports when working with \_\_\_\_\_.

Team members' signatures

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Review date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Behaviour support planning is the process by which families, teachers and other school staff work as a team to meet the individual needs of students with behaviour disabilities. As a parent, you are an important member of your child's learning team.

You can participate in the behaviour support planning process by:

- providing information about your child's past experience and his or her goals, interests and areas of need
- regularly contacting your child's teachers
- taking an active role in the decisions made for your child
- learning about available services and resources
- working with your child at home to support the goals set through the behaviour support planning process
- actively participating in behaviour support planning meetings.

### Before behaviour support planning meetings

- Discuss the positive elements in the behaviour support plan with your child.
- Find out about your child's involvement and role in the meeting. Decide if your child will benefit from participating in the meeting, or at least part of the meeting.
- Review the comments from your child's last report card, and goals and objectives from the last behaviour support plan. What progress have you seen? Note areas of concern.
- Ask your child questions or, if your child attends the meeting, he or she may be able to give input directly. For example:
  - What do you like best about school? What do you feel are your successes?
  - What problems do we need to find solutions for? What changes would help you learn better at school?
  - What would you like to happen this year?
- Be prepared. Jot down questions and concerns that you want to discuss. For example:
  - Whom should I call if I have concerns about my child's school program?
  - Will the team review the behaviour support plan every term?
  - What kinds of changes in our home does the school need to know about?
- Prioritize your concerns.

### **At behaviour support planning meetings**

- Ask about new assessments, reports or observations.
- Ask about your child's strengths, interests, areas of growth, areas of need and friendships.
- Ask any other questions you have about your child's progress or programming.
- Talk about your present and future goals for your child.
- Discuss your specific concerns about your child.
- Talk about home conditions that may affect your child's performance or behaviour at school and provide recent documents or medical updates.
- Circulate samples of work your child has completed at home, if you think this can help other team members understand your child better. Ask to see samples of work your child has done at school.

### **At the close of behaviour support planning meetings**

- Establish mutually agreed-upon goals and strategies for your child.
- Find out how you can support your child at home.
- Take notes on timelines, recommendations; for example, suggestions for additional services or assessments.
- Verbally summarize your understanding and interpretation of the decisions made, actions team members will take, timelines, and roles and responsibilities of each participant.
- Give feedback to the people working with your child about areas where you have noted positive effort, growth or change.
- Sign the behaviour support plan to indicate your agreement. If you do not agree with the behaviour support plan and do not wish to sign, the school has an obligation to document the reasons for your decision and the actions taken to resolve the issue.
- Ask for a copy of the behaviour support plan to refer to at home.
- Decide on the next meeting date.

### **After behaviour support planning meetings**

- Share positive feedback from the meeting with your child.
- Discuss what needs to happen in order to reach the goals of the behaviour support plan. Discuss your child's role and how school staff and your family will support the plan.

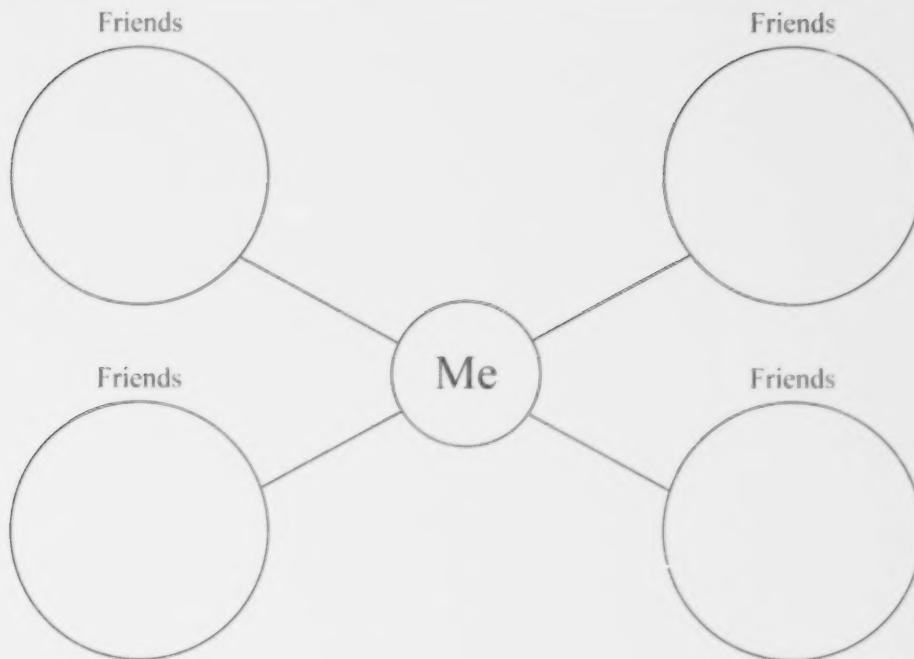
**To review the effectiveness of your child's behaviour support plan, ask yourself these questions**

- How does the behaviour support plan build on my child's strengths?
- How does the behaviour support plan address my child's individual needs?
- Does the behaviour support plan focus on key goals for my child?
- How are supports tailored to my child's strengths, areas of need and learning preferences?
- Does the behaviour support plan use more than one source of assessment data to determine strengths and areas of need?
- If several teachers are responsible for my child's education program, do all of them have access to the behaviour support plan so they can use it to plan instruction, monitor progress and help measure success?
- Is the school frequently monitoring progress toward the goals of the behaviour support plan? If my child is not demonstrating progress, does the team review the program and make changes?

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

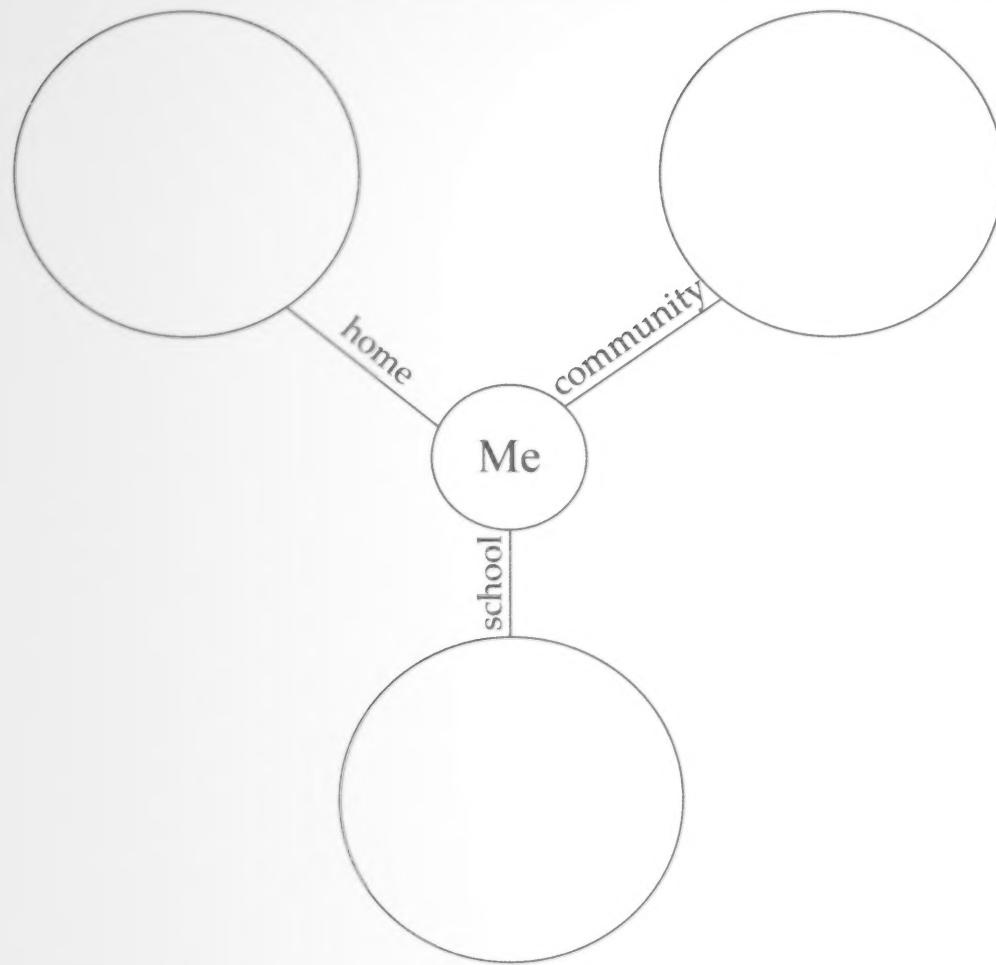
Friends are:



1. My friends at school are \_\_\_\_\_
2. My friends outside of school are \_\_\_\_\_
3. My friends and I like to \_\_\_\_\_
4. My friends like me because \_\_\_\_\_
5. I like having friends because \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



1. The people who help me at school are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The people who help me in my family are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The people who help me in my community are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**3 things**

I want my new teacher to know

about **me**



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

These are my wishes for my child next school year.



Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The list below contains ways you and your child's teacher might want to communicate. Please check off the methods that work best for you.

1. Ideally, how much contact do you wish to have with your child's teacher?

- daily
- once a week
- once a month
- once a term
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Would you prefer

- to contact your child's teacher?
- the teacher to contact you?
- both?

3. Which methods do you find most valuable?

- written notes
- telephone calls
- school newsletters
- parent/teacher/student meetings
- Individualized Program Planning (IPP) conferences (September, November, April, June)
- student-led conferences (November, April)
- classroom visits
- e-mail
- other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Contact information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

The best times to contact me are \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the numbers that best describe how the student demonstrates this behaviour today.

	Wonderful!	Satisfactory	Needs improvement
Brings all needed supplies and books to class	3	2	1
Follows directions with minimal prompting	3	2	1
Starts to work with minimal prompting	3	2	1
Interacts positively with peers	3	2	1
Responds positively to teacher requests	3	2	1

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Today's in-class performance:

was wonderful!  
 was satisfactory  
 needs improvement

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Polite voice		Hands and feet to myself		Following teacher's requests	
	Me	My teacher	Me	My teacher	Me	My teacher
9:00 to 10:30						
10:45 to 12:00						
1:00 to 2:15						
2:30 to 3:00						

4—great!

3—okay

2—needs work

1—not acceptable

What went well today

What we need to work on

Encouraging words from parents

1. This chart is adapted with permission from Diane Malbin, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder: A Five-part Set of Information for Parents and Professionals; Set Five: Master Set: Collection of Set One Through Four* (Portland, OR: FASCETS, Inc., 1999), pp. 33–34.
2. This chart is adapted with permission from Diane Malbin, “Paradigm Shifts and FASD” (Portland, OR: FASCETS, Inc., 1997, revised 2006) and from Diane Malbin, *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol-related Neurodevelopmental Disorders: Trying Differently Rather than Harder* (2nd edition) (Portland, OR: FASCETS, Inc., 1999, 2002), p. 42.
3. This checklist is adapted with permission from the work of January Baugh, Deb Rawlings and Carrie-Anne Bauche, Medicine Hat High School (Medicine Hat, Alberta, 2005).
4. These steps adapted with permission from Gordon L. Porter et al., “Problem Solving Teams: A Thirty-Minute Peer-Helping Model,” in Gordon L. Porter and Diane Richler (eds.), *Changing Canadian Schools: Perspectives on Disability and Inclusion* (North York, ON: The Roeher Institute, 1991), pp. 224–228.
5. This information adapted with permission from The Alberta Teachers’ Association, *Advocacy: A Practical Guide* (Edmonton, AB: The Alberta Teachers’ Association, 2008), p. 2.

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**A****actions for supporting students and school staff**

- about taking actions, 4–5
- advocate for students, 38
- align strategies with student needs, 14–16, 51–56
- build a circle of adult support, 32, 67
- build a circle of peer support, 30–31, 66
- build rapport with school staff, 17–18, 57–58
- help others to understand FASD, 7–11, 40–45
- identify student strengths and interests, 12–13, 46–50
- keep informed about research, 19–20, 59–60
- make school a safe place, 27–29
- plan for transitions, 33–34, 68–69
- support learning at home, 35–37, 70–72
- support positive behaviour, 21–26, 61–65

*ACYI Transition Planning Protocol for Youth with Disabilities*, 34

**administrators, school.** *See* principals and administrators

**advocacy**, 38

**Alberta Learning Information System (ALIS) website**, 60

**All About Me (template)**, 33, 68

**Answering Basic Questions about FASD (handout)**, 7, 40–43

**assessment and evaluation procedures**

- in individual student support plan, 16, 52

**assignment completion**

- in individual student support plan, 15, 51

**assistants, teacher.** *See* teacher assistants

**attention support**

- in individual student support plan, 15, 51

**B****behaviour of students with FASD**

- actions to support positive behaviour, 21–26, 61–65
- bullying prevention, 27–29
- individual behaviour support plan, 23–25, 61–62
- individual student support plan, 14–16, 51–52
- meetings for planning behaviour support, 63–64
- mental shifts about behaviour, 9–10, 21–22, 45
- misbehaviour *vs.* misunderstanding, 4, 22
- movement needs, 26
- response to consequences, 41
- sensory issues, 26

*Building on Success: Helping Students Make Transitions from Year to Year*, 34, 59

**Bully Free Alberta website**, 29

**bullying prevention**, 27–29

**C**

**caregivers.** *See parents/caregivers*

*Challenges and Opportunities: A Handbook for Teachers of Students with Special Needs*, 60

**Chronological-age vs. Developmental-age Expectations (handout)**, 7–9, 44

**Circle of Friends (template)**, 30, 66

**Circle of Support (template)**, 32, 67

**communication between home and school**

actions to support learning at home, 35–37

daily reports, 36, 71–72

parent checklist for preferred methods, 35, 70

strategies to increase, 43

**cri~~s~~ management plan**

in individual behaviour support plan, 25, 62

*See also* behaviour of students with FASD

**D**

**Daily Report (template)**, 36, 71

*See also* communication between home and school

**developmental vs. chronological age**, 7–9, 44

**E**

**extended families.** *See parents/caregivers*

**extracurricular activities**, 30–31

**F**

**families.** *See parents/caregivers*

**FASD**

about taking actions, 4–5

developmental levels, 7–9, 44

key knowledge to communicate, 7, 40–43

medical diagnosis, 7, 40–41

mental shifts about students with, 9–10, 21–22, 45

positive language for, 10–11

prevention of, 42

*See also* students with FASD

*FASD: Strategies not Solutions*, 59

**Feeling Better (template)**, 14, 54

**feelings of students**

connectedness, 30–31

parents' tips for helping their child feel better, 14, 53

students' tips for helping them feel better, 14, 54

**fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.** *See FASD*

*Focusing on Success: Teaching Students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*, 59

**G**

*Guidelines for Supporting Successful Transitions for Children and Youth*, 34

## H

**Himmelreich, Myles**

- on homework difficulties, 35
- on misbehaviour of students with FASD, 4

**home-school communication books**, 36, 71–72

*See also* communication between home and school

**homework**

- difficulties for students, 35
- homework buddies, 30
- tips for parents, 37

**How I Learn Inventory (template)**, 14, 55–56

## I

**Individual Behaviour Support Plan (template)**, 23–25, 61–62**Individual Student Support Plan (template)**, 14–16, 51–52*Individualized Program Planning*, 34, 59**Interest Inventory (template)**, 12, 46

## L

**language to use**

- mental shifts about student behaviour, 9–10, 21–22, 45
- modelling positive language, 10–11
- people first, then disability, 11

**Let's Stay in Touch (template)**, 35, 70

## M

*Making a Difference: Working with Students Who Have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders*, 20, 60**Making Mental Shifts about Students with FASD (handout)**, 9–10, 45**medical issues**

- diagnosis of FASD, 7, 40–41
- in individual student support plan, 16, 52

**meetings**

- behaviour support planning meetings, 63–64
- solution-focused approach, 17–18, 57–58

**movement needs**, 26**My Child Through My Eyes (template)**, 13, 48**My School Day Report (template)**, 36, 72**My Strengths Inventory (template)**, 13, 50

## P

**Parent Survey (template)**, 12, 47**Parents' Tips for Helping Their Child Feel Better (template)**, 14, 53

**parents/caregivers**

- actions to support learning at home, 35–37, 70–72
- advocacy for, 38
- bullying prevention, 27–29
- goals for their children, 33, 69
- parent survey of child's interests, 12, 47
- parent survey of child's strengths, 12–13, 47–49
- parents' tips for helping a child feel better, 14, 53
- privacy of, 11, 42
- strategies to enlist support of, 43
- tips on behaviour support planning, 23, 63–65

*See also* communication between home and school; resources

**peer support, 30–31****Planner for a Solution-focused Meeting (template), 18, 58****Planning for Post-secondary Studies, 34****principals and administrators**

- advocacy for students, 38
- solution-focused meetings, 17–18, 57–58

*See also* school staff

**privacy issues, 11, 42****R****Reach to Teach: Educating Elementary and Middle School Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, 20, 60****reading support**

- in individual student support plan, 16, 52
- reframing student behaviour, 9–10, 21–22, 45

**resources**

- for prevention of FASD, 42
- for supporting and teaching students, 19–20, 42–43, 59–60
- for transition planning, 34
- how to gather information, 19

**Resources for Teaching and Supporting Students with FASD (handout), 59–60****S****school staff**

- actions for safe schools, 27–29
- actions to build a circle of adult support, 32, 67
- actions to build rapport with, 17–18, 57–58
- actions to support, 7–11, 40–45
- key knowledge about FASD for, 7, 40–43
- mental shifts about student behaviour, 9–10, 21–22, 45
- solution-focused meetings, 17–18, 57–58
- use of positive language, 10–11

*See also* resources

**schools**

- about role of, 4–5
- transitions to, 33–34, 68–69

**seating of student**

in individual student support plan, 15, 51

**sensory issues for students, 26****social skills**

bullying prevention, 27–29

circle of adult support, 32, 67

circle of peer support, 30–31, 66

**solution-focused meetings, 17–18, 57–58****sports, 30–31****students with FASD**

about providing support for, 4–5

actions for advocacy for, 38

actions to build peer and community support, 30–32, 66–67

actions to identify student strengths and interests, 12–13, 46–50

developmental levels, 7–9, 44

diversity of, 7, 11, 41

feelings of, 14, 30–31, 53–54

interests of, 12, 46

learning preferences, 14, 55–56

letters to teachers, 33, 68

movement needs, 26

privacy of, 11, 42

sensory issues, 26

strengths of, 12–13, 46–50

transition planning, 33–34, 68–69

*See also* behaviour of students with FASD; FASD; feelings of students

**students with FASD, templates**

all about me, 33, 68

circle of friends, 30, 66

circle of support, 32, 67

feeling better, 14, 54

how I learn inventory, 14, 55–56

individual behaviour support plan, 23–25, 61–62

interest inventory, 12, 46

strengths inventory, 13, 50

student support plan, 14–16, 51–52

*Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools*, 59

**T****teacher assistants**

role in individual student support plan, 14–16, 52

solution-focused meetings, 17–18, 57–58

*See also* school staff

**teachers**

- letters from parents to, 33, 69
- letters from students to, 33, 68
- mental shifts about student behaviour, 9–10, 21–22, 45
- solution-focused meetings, 17–18, 57–58

*See also* communication between home and school; resources; teaching strategies

*Teaching for the Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder*, 42

**teaching strategies**

- actions to align strategies with student needs, 14–16, 51–56
- actions to stay informed about research on, 19–20, 59–60
- individual student support plan, 14–16, 51–52
- positive language for goals, 11
- student inventory of preferred strategies, 14, 55–56

*Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Building Strengths, Creating Hope*, 5, 19, 42, 59

*Teaching Students with Learning and Behavioural Differences: A Resource Guide for Teachers*, 59

*The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs*, 43, 59

**Three Wishes for My Child (template)**, 33, 69

**Tips for Parents: Participating in Behaviour Support Planning (handout)**, 23, 63–65

**Top Three for My Child (template)**, 13, 49

*Towards Inclusion: Tapping Hidden Strengths: Planning for Students Who Are Alcohol-affected*, 20, 60

**transitions**

- actions for planning, 33–34, 68–69

**W****writing support**

- in individual student support plan, 16, 52

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# Re: defining success

A team approach to  
supporting students with FASD

A strategy guide for mentors and coaches  
working in schools

This strategy guide for mentors, youth workers and coaches working with students with FASD offers ideas and strategies for twelve actions for supporting these students and helping them be more successful at school, including:

1. Help school staff build an understanding of FASD
2. Identify student strengths and interests
3. Align strategies with student needs
4. Build rapport with school staff
5. Keep informed about current research and best educational practices
6. Support positive behaviour
7. Work with staff to make school a safe place
8. Help build a circle of peer support
9. Help build a circle of adult support
10. Plan for transitions
11. Support learning at home
12. Advocate for increased understanding and support for students with FASD.